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ABSTRACT

This report presents findings on the well-being of American children from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), a longitudinal study conducted at 4 month intervals by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data were collected in fall 1994 and include a variety of indicators to portray children's experiences while growing up, such as differences in family living arrangements, economic and social environments, and the types of neighborhoods where children live. Findings are presented in the following areas: (1) families and neighborhoods, including living arrangements and family characteristics, family income, and neighborhood safety; (2) early child care experiences, including types of child care and child care entry ages; (3) parent-child interactions, including family reading practices and evidence of television viewing rules; (4) participation in extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, and lessons; (5) academic achievement, including school changes, grade repetition, academic achievement, enrollment in gifted classes, and suspensions. Data are delineated by family or household characteristics and child's age, sex, or ethnicity. Among the main findings were the following: children in married-couple families and with higher incomes are more likely to enter non-family child care arrangements at early ages than children in single-parent or low income households. These children also have more frequent reading interactions with parents and more supervision over their television viewing, are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities and progress more steadily in school. (KB)

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A Child's Day: Home, School, and Play
(Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)

Household Economic Studies

1994

Issued February 2001

Current Population Reports

By
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INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) on the well-being of American children. While it may seem intuitive, the concept of child "well-being" is difficult to conceptualize and measure. Recent research primarily assesses child well-being for two age groups: preadolescent children and young adults making the transition to adulthood. Preadolescents are often assessed using measures of cognitive development, social environment, and time spent interacting with adults. Young adults are frequently studied in terms of their progress through school, transition into the labor force, and the timing of entrance into marriage and parenthood.

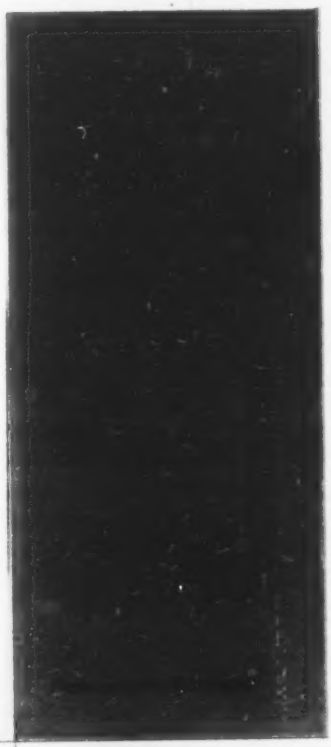
This report uses a variety of indicators to portray children's experiences while growing up. Data on child well-being were collected by interviews of households in the 1992 and 1993 SIPP panels, which were conducted at the same time in the fall of 1994. The topics covered in this report illustrate what children experience on a daily basis, including differences in family living arrangements, economic and social environments, and the types of neighborhoods where children live. Experiences with nonparental child care arrangements, daily interactions with parents, performance in school, and participation in extracurricular activities are other indicators of child development and future well-being. The decisions that families make about their children's daily activities are important, as many will affect their children's success over time.[1]

Previous research established a link between family structure and various related measures of child development and well-being.[2] Children in two-parent families fare better developmentally than children in single-parent families, with children of divorced parents having the most problems. In addition, children living with two biological parents are less likely to have problems than children living with one biological parent and one stepparent.[3] Child well-being indicators associated with children of divorced or single parents include low

[1] To isolate the contribution of individual factors that are related to behavioral outcomes for children, one would need a multivariate analysis which would control for the effect of many factors simultaneously; this type of analysis has previously been conducted for some of the topics covered in this report. See Jason M. Fields and Kristin E. Smith, *Poverty, Family Structure, and Child Well-Being: Indicators From the SIPP*, Population Division Working Paper Series, No. 23, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1998.

[2] Robert Hauser, Brett Brown, and William Prosser (editors), *Indicators of Children's Well-Being*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1997.

[3] Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, *Growing Up With a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1994.



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measures of academic achievement (repeated grades, low marks, low class standing), increased likelihood of dropping out of high school, early childbearing, and increased levels of depression, stress, anxiety, and aggression.

Familial stress associated with marital conflict and divorce can negatively affect a child's development.[4] Diminished contact with the noncustodial parent can result in a loss of emotional support and supervision from adults. Children of single parents generally have a lower economic standard of living and more frequently participate in government assistance programs than do children from two-parent families.[5] All of these circumstances have a cumulative effect on the way children grow up and how they are prepared for young adulthood.

FAMILIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

More than one in five children live in families with incomes below $1,500 per month.

In the fall of 1994, 51.0 million of the 68.2 million children in the United States were living in two-parent households (see Table 1). An additional 15.7 million children were living with a single female-designated parent, while only 1.6 million were living with a single male-designated parent (see definitions box for "Designated Parent"). Forty-nine percent of all children (33.6 million) were living in families with monthly incomes of $3,000 or above. Another 18 million children lived in families with monthly incomes from $1,500 to $2,999 and

Table 1.
Living Arrangements and Family Characteristics of Children: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	All children	Less than 6 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years
Total	68,225	21,844	23,634	22,747
Number of Children in the Household				
1	13,972	5,101	3,040	5,831
2	27,124	8,827	9,685	8,612
3	16,448	5,030	6,470	4,947
4	6,625	1,793	2,812	2,021
5 or more	4,056	1,093	1,627	1,336
Number of Adults in the Household				
No adults in household	16	16	-	-
1	11,406	3,346	4,297	3,763
2	47,134	17,279	16,498	13,357
3	7,099	910	1,999	4,191
4 or more	2,570	293	841	1,436
Parental Presence				
Lives with two parents	50,958	17,470	17,053	16,434
Lives with female parent only	15,692	4,083	6,082	5,528
Lives with male parent only	1,575	291	498	785
Marital and Work Status of Parents				
Married couple[1]	50,958	17,470	17,053	16,434
Both worked last month	30,295	9,228	10,166	10,902
One worked last month	18,637	7,630	6,183	4,824
Neither worked last month	2,026	612	705	709
Other marital status	17,267	4,374	6,581	6,312
Worked last month	10,141	1,967	3,847	4,327
Did not work last month	7,126	2,407	2,734	1,986
Sex of Child				
Female	33,088	10,584	11,529	10,976
Male	35,137	11,260	12,106	11,771
Sex of Parent				
Female	62,057	20,174	21,612	20,271
Male	6,168	1,670	2,022	2,476
Race/Ethnicity of Child				
Non-Hispanic White	46,893	15,522	16,035	15,336
Non-Hispanic Black	8,839	2,496	3,237	3,106
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	2,857	895	930	1,032
Hispanic[2]	9,636	2,931	3,432	3,273
Monthly Family Income				
Less than $1,500	15,875	5,560	5,725	4,590
$1,500 to $2,999	18,281	6,016	6,331	5,933
$3,000 to $4,499	15,134	4,873	5,352	4,909
$4,500 and over	18,503	5,248	6,064	7,191
Income not reported	433	147	162	124
Poverty Level				
Below poverty level	14,043	4,845	5,181	4,017
On or above poverty level	53,750	16,853	18,292	18,606
100 to 199 percent of poverty	15,907	5,075	5,725	5,107
200 percent of poverty or higher	37,843	11,777	12,566	13,499
Income not reported	433	147	162	124

See footnotes at end of table.

[4]Andrew Cherlin, *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1992.

[5]Martin O'Connell, *Children With Single Parents - How They Fare. Census Brief*, CENBR/97-1, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1997.

Table 1.
Living Arrangements and Family Characteristics of Children: Fall 1994—Con.

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	All children	Less than 6 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years
Poverty Level and Program Receipt				
In poverty, with aid	9,057	3,437	3,272	2,348
In poverty, no aid	4,986	1,408	1,909	1,669
100 to 199 percent of poverty, with aid	2,983	1,298	974	711
100 to 199 percent of poverty, no aid	12,924	3,778	4,751	4,395
More than 200 percent of poverty	37,843	11,777	12,566	13,499
Income level not reported	433	147	162	124
Neighborhood Context[3]				
High opinion	16,316	4,686	5,883	5,746
Medium opinion	19,392	6,232	6,829	6,332
Low opinion	18,831	6,751	6,394	5,687
Neighborhood context not reported	13,686	4,176	4,529	4,981

- Zero or rounds to zero.

[1]Includes only married, spouse present.
[2]Hispanics may be of any race.
[3]Average composite score based on a scale of 0 to 10 of several questions related to neighborhood characteristics.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

almost 16 million lived in families making below $1,500 per month.

While financial resources are often presented as the most significant family resource, daily contact with parents and adult relatives can also be extremely important in developing children's personalities and skills. Families with additional adults in the household may have more time available and provide better supervision for children. Fourteen percent of children (9.7 million) in 1994 lived in households with three or more people 18 years and over.[6]

Although adults are the principal providers of financial resources for the family, children also depend on their siblings for daily emotional companionship. While multiple children generally strain financial resources and raise the chance of being in poverty, living in a married-couple family appears to ameliorate a significant portion of the financial burden compared with other family structures (see Figure 1). Regardless of the number of children in the household, children living in families with married parents have lower poverty rates than children living with never-married parents or with separated, divorced, or widowed parents.

Dual-income married couples with children consider their neighborhoods to have higher levels of safety.

Neighborhood quality plays an important role in child development. Families with sufficient resources may be able to relocate if they are not happy with their neighborhood easier than families in strained economic circumstances. Neighborhoods that parents consider safe and with neighbors who can be trusted to look out for children are associated with higher levels of child well-being. Children who grow up in neighborhoods where events such as teen births and violence are the norm are more likely to experience similar events and have problem behaviors as they transition into adulthood.[7]

Designated Parent

In the SIPP child well-being module, data are collected for children from a respondent who is identified as the "designated parent." The designated parent includes biological, step, and adoptive parents, and may also include other relatives or nonrelatives acting as a guardian for the child in the absence of the parents. In married-couple families, the mother is the designated parent — if the mother is not available for an interview, the father or husband may provide the mother's information as a proxy respondent. In single-parent families, the resident parent is the designated parent. If neither parent is in the household, the guardian is the designated parent. In this module, 98 percent of the children had their mother assigned as the designated parent. Data from fathers who were the designated parent (about 10 percent) are included with the data on the mothers. People 15 to 17 years old, who themselves may be parents, have their child well-being history reported not by themselves but by their parents who live with them in the household.

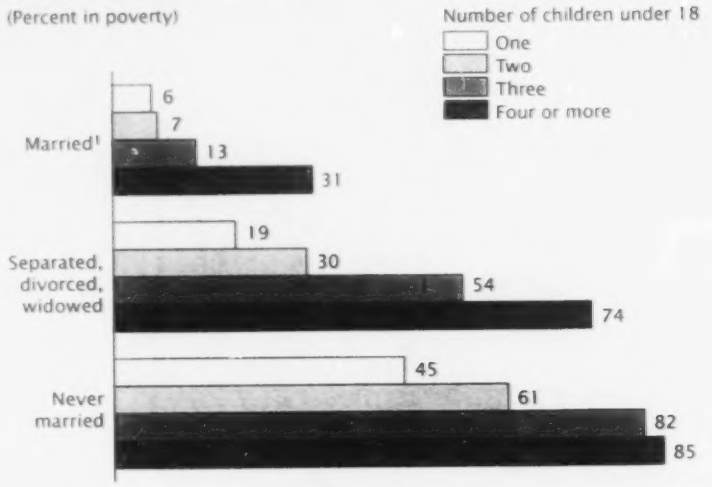
[6]The people over 18 include older siblings and other related and nonrelated individuals.
[7]Dennis Hogan and Evelyn Kitagawa, "The Impact of Social Status, Family Structure, and Neighborhood on the Fertility of Black Adolescents," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 9 (1985): 825-855.

The SIPP questionnaire also contained a series of seven questions designed to measure the perceived levels of safety and trust in the community. The items covered the following areas: safety concerns, trust in neighbors to look out for each other, and the presence of negative influences in the children's environment. Parents responded to these items on a scale of 0 to 10 where a value of 10 is the best possible rating. These items were combined into an index, of the same range, that represents the parents' views about their neighborhoods and communities. The average value on the neighborhood/community index was 6.6 for all children, indicating that on average, children are living in neighborhoods which are not perfect but are far from unsatisfactory.

A descriptive category "neighborhood context" was derived from this index by dividing it into three groups of approximately equal numbers of children: high (score above 8), medium (score above 6 but not above 8), and low (score of 6 or below). Just over 16 million children were living in neighborhoods regarded highly by their parents, about 19 million were in neighborhoods which parents considered at a medium level of safety and trust, and another 19 million children lived in neighborhoods assessed as low by their parents.[8] In a given household, neighborhood ratings did not differ by the age of the children, because the parents reported only once for the household, regardless of the number and ages of their children.

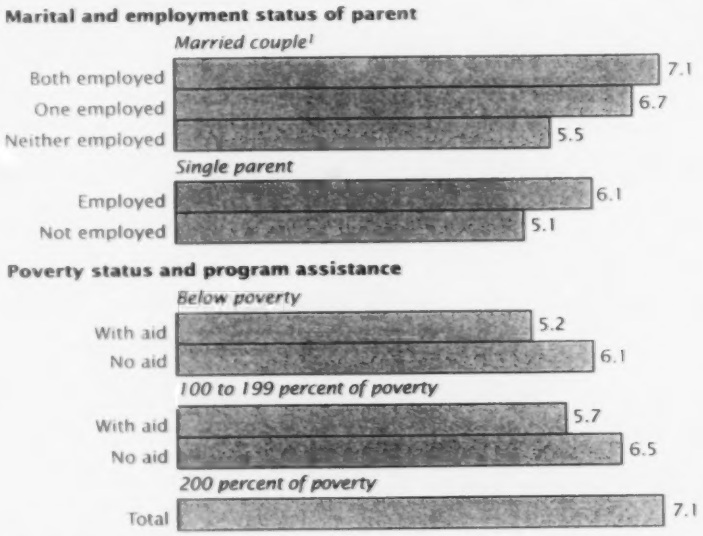
Figure 2 shows that this neighborhood index is higher for children in

Figure 1.
Children in Poverty by Marital Status of Parent and Number of Children Under 18 in the Household: Fall 1994



[1]Includes married, spouse present and spouse absent.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Figure 2.
Average Scores for Perception of Neighborhood Safety and Trust: Fall 1994



[1]Only includes married spouse present.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

[8]Not all parents responded to the items on neighborhood quality--20 percent of children lived in neighborhoods for which there was no report on neighborhood quality by their parents (see Table 1).

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Table 2.
Child Care Indicators by Current Family Employment Characteristics and Current Age of Child: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Family employment characteristics	Percent ever in child care			Average age at first child care arrangement (in months)[1]		Average time spent in first child care arrangement (hours per week)[1]	
	Less than 3 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	Less than 3 years	3 to 5 years	Less than 3 years	3 to 5 years
Total number of children	8,787	9,644	19,547	4,076	6,279	4,076	6,279
Total percent, average age, and average time in child care	46.4	65.1	50.2	5.7	19.7	29.7	25.6
Employment Status of the Designated Parent							
Worked last month	71.6	82.8	56.8	5.0	15.4	31.5	29.6
Full-time	76.4	85.7	58.8	4.7	13.3	36.1	33.6
Part-time	62.0	76.9	52.5	5.7	20.0	20.5	20.5
Did not work last month	17.4	45.2	39.5	8.9	28.8	20.8	17.3
Marital and Employment Status of the Parents[2]							
Married couple[3]							
Both worked last month	71.4	82.7	56.5	4.8	14.2	31.5	29.3
One worked last month	18.0	47.1	39.1	8.7	29.0	20.9	16.1
Neither worked last month	21.8	35.6	40.9	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Single parent							
Worked last month	79.3	90.7	59.4	5.8	18.6	33.4	31.3
Did not work last month	23.6	42.8	41.1	7.8	26.4	23.4	21.0

B Base too small to show derived statistic.

[1]Items not asked for children 6 to 11 years old. Measures based only on children ever having been in child care.

[2]Full-time includes those who usually work 35 or more hours per week; part-time includes those who usually work 1 to 34 hours per week; those who did not work last month include individuals who are unemployed or are not in the labor force.

[3]Only includes married, spouse present.

Note: Characteristics of the designated parent and the age of child are as of the survey date. Average age at first care arrangement and time spent in first care arrangement are based on population estimates only for those children for whom valid answers were reported.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

married-couple families where both parents work than for other children. Neighborhood index scores are lower for single-parent households and households where the parents are not working. Children living in households in poverty are more likely than other children to live in neighborhoods where parents are concerned about safety and the quality of potential informal care/supervision networks.

Parents' opinions about their neighborhood may also reflect their own happiness with their current family and economic situation rather than objective differences. Parents who are married and who are both employed may have a positive outlook on life which may carry over to their feelings about their neighborhood and community. It is also possible that this rosy picture overshadows or minimizes actual problems in the neighborhood, which may be apparent to parents in less fortunate circumstances. If married-couple dual-earner families have more financial resources, then these parents may worry less about their neighborhood circumstances and their ability to purchase better (or safer) care for their children.

EARLY CHILD CARE EXPERIENCES

It is common today for families with young children to have both the mother and father in the labor force. One by-product of this joint labor force participation has been a strong demand for child care for young children. Although the direct impact of child care on child well-being has yet to be fully explored, growing proportions of children will experience nonparental child care arrangements at early ages as their parents, especially mothers, return to the labor force within several months after childbirth.

Experiences in early childhood can shape a child's development and pave the way for future well-being. Being cared for in a child care arrangement by someone other than a family member is an increasingly common event in a child's preschool years, resulting partly from

the continuous rise in the labor force rate of mothers with preschoolers in the past two decades. The proportion ever in child care arrangements by someone other than an immediate family member is presented in Table 2 for children under 12 years of age. For children currently under 6 years of age, their average age when they entered their first arrangement is also shown, as well as the number of hours per week spent in this arrangement. Although the current characteristics of the family may not correspond to their characteristics at the time when their child first entered child care, the statistics in Table 2 provide a picture of the different situations experienced by children living in families of varying socio-demographic characteristics.

Just over half of children under age 12 have been in child care.

In the fall of 1994, 20.2 million children (53 percent) under age 12 had been cared for regularly by someone other than members of their immediate family (derived from Table 2).[9] Among children less than 3 years old, 46 percent had been in a regular child care arrangement, compared with 65 percent of 3- to 5-year olds. However, among children 6 to 11 years old, only 50 percent had ever been in a regular child care arrangement. One factor that might account for the lower level of child care for children 6 to 11 years old is that they were of preschool-age in the mid to late 1980s, when organized child care facilities were less common and mothers were less likely to have been employed.

Children less than 3 years old begin their first child care arrangement at 6 months, on average.

Children's child care experiences are related to both their age and birth cohort (their year of birth). As children age, more of them are likely to have been in a regular child care arrangement. This phenomenon affects the average age for starting child care as well as the total proportion ever in child care. Children in earlier birth cohorts may not have entered child care as early as children in more recent birth cohorts because of the lower labor force participation of women in past decades. The average age at first child care for a given group of children will generally be higher for older than for younger children because of increased use of child care by children in more recent cohorts. In addition, 3- to 5-year olds have a higher age at first child care because a number of them begin child care in this age group as parents use preschool programs to prepare children for school or to supplement half-day kindergarten. The combination of these effects can be seen when the average age for entering child care is examined for different age groups of children. Table 2 shows that 6 months is the average age that children who were less than 3 years old in 1994 began regular child care. Among children 3 to 5 years old in 1994, their average age to enter child care was 20 months. Early entrance into child care is consistent with findings of early entry into the labor force by mothers after their child's birth. Research using data from the 1980s found that between 53 and 60 percent of women return to work within 6 months of their child's birth, and 46 percent return to work within 3 months after the first birth.[10]

The average amount of time infants and toddlers spend in their first child care experience constitutes a very large part of the week. Children less than 3 years old spent, on average, 30 hours per week in their first child care arrangement. The older cohort of children also spent a considerable amount of time in their first arrangement, about 26 hours per week.

Focusing on children under age 3 would present a relatively incomplete picture of the child care experiences of children throughout their preschool years, while the characteristics of the families of children 6 to 11 years old in 1994 may have changed considerably since the child's first child care experience almost a decade earlier. For these reasons, the subsequent section on child care examines only children age 3 to 5 years old.

Approximately 32 percent of children 3 to 5 years old started child care by the time they were 3 months old. Before their first birthday, 47 percent had been in some type of regular child care arrangement. These statistics indicate that child care experiences are becoming a common event in the everyday lives of young children.

[9]Because not all items in the child well-being modules were answered by parental respondents, the estimated numbers and derived statistics shown in this section and in all subsequent sections are computed only for those respondents who gave valid answers. As a result, population estimates of the number of children by age and by different characteristics will differ in the tables in the report, reflecting the level of nonresponse for specific items. Table 1, however, shows the estimated number of children regardless of nonresponse to child well-being items.

[10]Kristin E. Smith and Amara Bachu, *Women's Labor Force Attachment Patterns and Maternity Leave: A Review of the Literature*, Population Division Working Paper Series, No. 32, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1999.

Table 3.
Early Child Care Experiences—Characteristics of Children and Parents: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Age of child			Type of early child care experience[1]						
				Percent ever in child care arrangement			Average age at first child care arrangement (in months)[2]		Average time spent in first child care arrangement (hours per week)[2]	
	Less than 3 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	Less than 3 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	Less than 3 years	3 to 5 years	Less than 3 years	3 to 5 years
Total	8,787	9,644	19,547	46.4	65.1	50.2	5.7	19.7	29.7	25.6
CHILD										
Sex										
Female	4,296	4,695	9,556	47.5	65.3	49.8	6.1	20.0	29.5	25.3
Male	4,491	4,948	9,992	45.4	65.0	50.6	5.3	19.5	29.8	25.9
Race/Ethnicity										
Non-Hispanic White	6,394	6,661	13,310	49.2	69.0	54.3	5.5	19.3	29.4	24.9
Non-Hispanic Black	972	1,162	2,681	44.0	63.6	51.1	5.8	19.2	32.0	28.9
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	319	404	734	39.0	62.8	32.3	7.3	24.9	33.4	25.9
Hispanic[3]	1,101	1,417	2,822	34.3	48.6	34.6	6.6	21.7	28.1	27.3
PARENT										
Sex										
Female	8,581	9,394	18,795	46.4	64.9	50.1	5.6	19.6	29.7	25.7
Male	206	250	752	45.5	72.1	51.4	8.0	24.6	29.8	23.8
Race/Ethnicity										
Non-Hispanic White	6,355	6,644	13,334	49.2	69.2	54.3	5.5	19.0	29.4	25.0
Non-Hispanic Black	927	1,100	2,590	44.7	62.2	51.4	6.0	19.4	32.1	29.1
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	325	423	753	35.7	64.5	33.8	6.8	24.4	33.2	28.9
Hispanic[3]	1,180	1,477	2,871	35.4	49.1	34.6	5.9	22.9	28.3	26.3
Marital Status										
Married[4]	7,244	7,530	14,148	46.8	64.9	49.4	5.5	19.2	29.4	25.0
Separated, divorced, widowed	946	974	1,648	40.1	60.7	47.5	5.9	21.1	29.7	27.2
Never married	597	1,140	3,751	51.5	70.5	54.5	7.4	21.6	32.4	28.2
Educational Attainment										
Less than high school	1,314	1,723	3,403	28.5	43.3	34.8	6.4	28.1	26.8	24.4
High school	2,621	3,060	6,792	42.7	62.8	46.7	5.2	20.6	30.2	26.1
College, 1 to 3 years	2,433	2,689	5,213	49.2	69.9	55.3	6.1	18.2	30.6	25.7
College, 4 or more years	2,419	2,171	4,139	57.2	79.8	62.1	5.4	16.9	29.2	25.7
Employment Status[5]										
Worked last month	4,701	5,105	12,105	71.6	82.8	56.8	5.0	15.4	31.5	29.6
Full-time	3,134	3,436	8,295	76.4	85.7	58.8	4.7	13.3	36.1	33.6
Part-time	1,567	1,669	3,810	62.0	76.9	52.5	5.7	20.0	20.5	20.5
Did not work last month	4,086	4,539	7,442	17.4	45.2	39.5	8.9	28.8	20.8	17.3
Occupation[6]										
Managerial-professional	1,431	1,383	2,983	78.3	90.8	68.7	4.3	12.3	32.3	30.4
Technical, sales, and administrative	1,803	1,803	4,462	73.6	85.8	57.2	5.1	14.8	34.1	31.4
Service occupations	615	815	1,943	63.1	78.2	48.5	5.4	20.9	27.2	24.4
Other	847	1,099	2,686	62.1	71.2	48.4	5.9	17.5	26.0	28.3

[1]Statistics are based only on those children ever being in child care for whom valid answers were reported.
[2]Items not asked for children 6 to 11 years old. Measures based only on children ever having been in child care.
[3]Hispanics may be of any race.
[4]Married includes married, spouse present and spouse absent (excluding separated).
[5]Full-time includes those who usually work 35 or more hours per week; part-time includes those who usually work 1 to 34 hours per week; those who did not work last month include individuals who are unemployed or are not in the labor force.
[6]Excludes those who work in the armed forces.

Note: Characteristics of the designated parent and the age of child are as of the survey date.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Eighty-three percent of children 3 to 5 years old of currently employed parents have been regularly cared for in a child care arrangement.

Children 3 to 5 years old whose parents graduated from college were more likely to have ever been in child care than children whose parents did not complete high school (80 percent and 43 percent, respectively; see Table 3). Children with college-educated parents were also more likely to start their first child care experience almost a year earlier than children whose parents did not graduate from high school (17 months and 28 months, respectively). In separate analyses, about 17 percent of children whose parents did not graduate from high school entered child care by 3 months of age compared with 35 percent whose parents had completed 4 or more years of college. This difference probably reflects lower labor force participation levels after childbirth among women with lower levels of educational attainment. Although children with parents from different educational backgrounds begin their child care experiences at a different pace, once in an arrangement, most children 3 to 5 years old spend a similar amount of time in child care per week (about 26 hours), regardless of their parents' educational level.

Early child care experiences differ by parental employment.

The labor force status of the parents is an important factor in determining whether a child will need a regular child care arrangement. (Labor force status in this report refers to the month preceding the interview date; information about the parents' employment status at the time when the child first entered a child care arrangement is not available.) In 1994, 83 percent of 3- to 5-year olds of employed parents had at some time been cared for regularly in a child care arrangement (see Table 2). Only 45 percent of 3- to 5-year olds whose parents were not working had ever been regularly cared for by a nonfamily member.

Children of parents who were working at the time of the survey started child care at younger ages than children whose parents were not working — in 1994, 15 months compared with 29 months. Whether the parents work full- or part-time also plays an important part in determining the age at entry into a regular child care arrangement. On average, children 3 to 5 years old of parents who were working full-time in 1994 started child care 7 months earlier than children of parents who were working part-time (13 months and 20 months, respectively). Children of parents working full-time also spent almost twice as many hours per week in their first child care arrangement (34 hours) compared with an average of 17 hours per week for children of nonworking parents (see Table 2).

Table 2 also shows the average number of hours spent by children 3 to 5 years old in their first child care arrangement by their parents current marital and labor force statuses. Among children in single-parent families, those whose parent was currently employed spent on average 31 hours per week in their first child care arrangement compared with only 21 hours per week among children whose parent was not currently employed.

Children of dual-earner married couples spent an average of 29 hours per week in their first child care arrangement — much more than children of married couples where only one parent was currently employed (16 hours per week). Although these labor force and marital status categories reflect the current family situation and not that of the time of the first care arrangement, the pattern of differences shown in Table 2 is what one would expect given the necessary demands and needs for child care in different family situations.

Higher-income families are more likely to use a child care arrangement.

Because child care is costly, the amount of income a family has will be a factor in the decision to enroll a child in a regular child care arrangement. Children living in families with higher incomes are more likely to have been in a child care arrangement at some point. Among 3- to 5-year olds, 81 percent of children living in families with a monthly income of $4,500 or higher have been cared for in a regular child care arrangement, compared with 51 percent of children living in families with a monthly income of less than $1,500 (see Table 4). In addition, about 7 out of every 10 children living at or above the poverty line have been in a regular child care arrangement compared with one-half of children below the poverty level. This large difference is noted despite the existence of Head Start programs which are especially geared to providing preschool experiences for children living in poverty. In addition, the average age when first entering child care is lower for children living in families at or above the poverty line (18 months) than for those children living below the poverty line (27 months).

Figure 3 looks at child care use by poverty status and receipt of

Table 4.
Early Child Care Experiences—Characteristics of Families and Households: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Age of child			Type of early child care experience[1]						
				Percent ever in child care arrangement			Average age at first child care arrangement (in months)[2]		Average time spent in first child care arrangement (hours per week)[2]	
	Less than 3 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	Less than 3 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	Less than 3 years	3 to 5 years	Less than 3 years	3 to 5 years
Total	8,787	9,644	19,547	46.4	65.1	50.2	5.7	19.7	29.7	25.6
Monthly Family Income										
Under $1,500	2,181	2,608	4,756	29.6	50.9	43.9	7.9	25.6	25.6	23.8
$1,500 to $2,999	2,433	2,574	5,238	43.6	58.4	44.4	5.4	20.8	29.6	26.6
$3,000 to $4,499	2,033	2,073	4,438	51.3	73.5	53.4	5.2	18.4	30.9	25.6
$4,500 and over	2,095	2,337	4,994	63.1	81.2	59.6	5.2	15.8	30.6	26.2
Income not reported	46	52	120	(B)	(B)	40.5	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Poverty Level										
Below poverty level	1,881	2,298	4,238	26.5	47.3	40.9	7.4	27.0	25.6	22.2
On or above poverty level	6,860	7,294	15,189	52.1	70.8	53.9	5.4	18.2	30.2	26.4
100 to 199 percent of poverty	1,957	2,291	4,740	40.5	57.0	42.7	6.3	21.5	28.5	26.6
200 percent of poverty or higher	4,903	5,002	10,449	56.7	77.2	57.5	5.2	17.1	30.7	26.3
Income not reported	46	52	120	(B)	(B)	40.5	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Tenure										
Owns home	4,833	5,516	11,969	51.8	72.0	52.9	5.6	18.4	30.1	25.4
Rents home	3,627	3,807	6,932	39.5	56.1	46.1	5.7	22.0	29.3	26.1
Other arrangement	327	320	646	43.7	53.3	43.6	5.7	22.2	24.8	26.8
Region of Residence										
Northeast	1,697	1,757	3,713	41.2	61.9	46.6	6.4	23.3	28.1	21.7
Midwest	2,294	2,425	4,623	48.5	69.0	56.2	4.9	19.3	29.8	25.1
South	2,807	3,105	6,551	50.0	67.1	50.7	5.7	17.9	30.9	28.8
West	1,989	2,358	4,660	43.3	60.9	46.3	6.0	20.3	28.8	24.8
Metropolitan Residence										
Metropolitan	6,909	7,604	15,138	45.5	64.2	49.4	5.9	20.1	29.7	25.1
Inside central cities	2,627	3,030	5,890	41.3	57.1	46.8	5.9	19.8	28.8	24.5
Outside central cities	4,281	4,574	9,248	48.0	68.9	51.0	5.9	20.3	30.2	25.5
Nonmetropolitan	1,878	2,040	4,409	50.0	68.4	53.0	4.9	18.3	29.7	27.3
Neighborhood Context[3]										
High opinion	2,063	2,469	5,719	48.3	70.5	54.8	6.0	19.0	29.6	25.0
Medium opinion	2,830	3,155	6,585	48.3	68.4	50.2	4.9	18.3	28.4	26.4
Low opinion	3,114	3,367	6,083	42.4	59.5	46.2	6.0	21.8	30.2	25.4
Neighborhood context not reported	779	653	1,160	50.7	58.1	48.2	6.0	20.0	33.0	25.7

B Base too small to show derived statistic.

[1]Statistics are based only on those children ever being in child care for whom valid answers were reported.

[2]Items not asked for children 6 to 11 years old. Measures based only on children ever having been in child care.

[3]Average composite score based on a scale of 0 to 10 of several questions related to neighborhood characteristics with 10 being the best rated level. See text for specifics on the items included in the variable. Score for parent applied to each individual child in the family.

Note: Characteristics of the designated parent and the age of child are as of the survey date.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

government assistance.[11] Among 3- to 5-year olds living below the poverty line, those children in families who received government assistance were about as likely to have been in child care as those in families who did not — 47 percent and 49 percent, respectively. Among children living just above poverty (between 100 and 199 percent of poverty), 60 percent of children in families that received assistance had been in child care — not significantly different from those children who did not receive

[11]Assistance programs in this report include WIC, AFDC, food stamps, and general assistance.

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assistance (56 percent). At these income levels, receipt of government assistance does not appear to be a contributing factor in whether a child has been in a regular child care arrangement. Rather, income levels, and hence the ability to pay for child care services, are associated with whether young children experience child care.

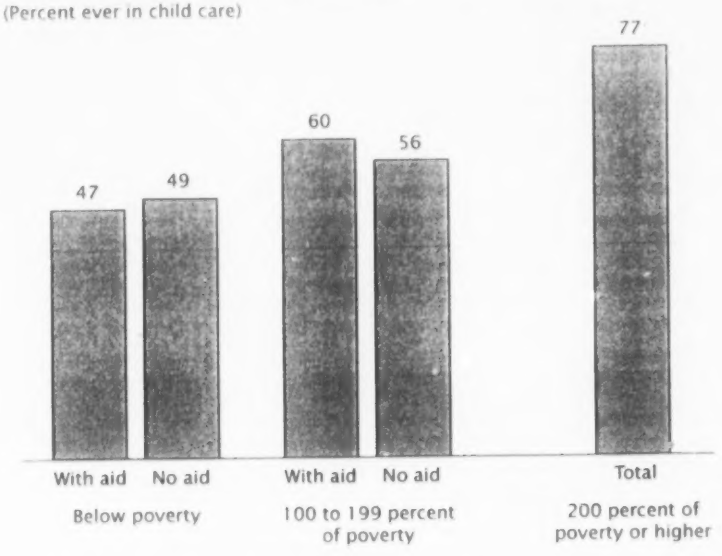
Parents with a high opinion of their neighborhood start their children in child care at earlier ages.

Earlier sections showed that the educational, employment, and economic status of families plays an important role in parents' decisions or needs for child care arrangements for their children. Parents who are highly educated are likely to be employed, which in turn increases the need for child care arrangements during working hours, especially among dual-earner families. Greater income provides more opportunities for securing and purchasing outside child care assistance on a regular basis. These economic factors also influence the quality of the neighborhood in which families live in terms of housing and community amenities.

One aspect of community life is the parents' opinions of neighborhood safety and trust. Children of parents who have a high opinion of their neighborhood's safety and trust are more likely to have been in a regular child care arrangement (71 percent and 60 percent, respectively) and to have started their first arrangement at younger ages than children of parents with a low opinion of their neighborhood — 19 months compared with 25 months (see Table 4).

Figure 3.
Children 3 to 5 Years Old Ever in Child Care by Current Poverty Status and Receipt of Program Assistance: Fall 1994

(Percent ever in child care)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

Another aspect of child well-being is the type of daily interaction that occurs between children and parents, such as reading together or setting rules for television viewing. Reading experiences indicate parental interest in their children's educational development at early ages. Setting rules and limits on the use of the television also shows parental interest in using the TV for both educational and enjoyment purposes.

The child well-being module included questions about the number of stories read to children and the existence of family TV rules for each child under 18 years old. Information was collected on the number of times in the past week that children 1 to 5 years old were read stories by the designated parent or other family members. Parents were asked questions on family TV rules for their children 3 to 17 years old concerning whether there were rules for the types of TV programs their children could watch, how early or late their children could watch TV, and limits on the number of hours watched.

Reading Interaction

Eleven percent of children 1 to 5 years old are not read stories by family members.

About 1.6 million children 1 to 5 years old (11 percent) were not read to by a family member in the week prior to the survey in 1994 — 13 percent of 1- and 2-year olds and 9 percent of 3- to 5-year olds (see Table 5). Among children who were read to by parents or family members, children 1 and 2 years

Table 5.
Reading to Children—Characteristics of Children and Parents: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Age of child		Family reading practices					
			Percent never read to last week		Average times read to child per week[1]		Percent of children read to seven or more times per week	
	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years
Total	5,777	9,375	12.8	9.1	8.9	6.8	48.2	46.5
CHILD								
Sex								
Female	2,792	4,565	12.3	8.7	9.1	7.1	48.2	48.1
Male	2,985	4,810	13.3	9.4	8.8	6.5	48.1	45.1
Race/Ethnicity								
Non-Hispanic White	4,114	6,532	7.6	4.2	10.0	7.2	56.2	52.9
Non-Hispanic Black	680	1,107	16.3	15.1	5.1	5.3	30.7	34.4
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	213	397	14.4	12.3	7.8	6.3	49.4	50.0
Hispanic[2]	769	1,339	37.1	26.9	5.6	5.3	20.1	25.6
PARENT								
Sex								
Female	5,639	9,129	12.7	9.1	8.9	6.8	48.2	46.8
Male	138	246	15.8	7.6	7.9	5.2	46.2	36.8
Race/Ethnicity								
Non-Hispanic White	4,114	6,531	7.2	4.3	10.0	7.3	56.2	53.0
Non-Hispanic Black	649	1,043	17.1	15.6	4.9	5.2	28.4	32.6
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	206	412	16.0	11.2	7.9	6.2	46.6	47.7
Hispanic[2]	808	1,390	37.2	26.2	5.7	5.3	23.2	26.4
Marital Status								
Married[3]	4,708	7,309	11.2	7.4	9.5	7.1	51.6	49.9
Separated, divorced, widowed	441	1,140	19.9	11.2	6.4	5.4	32.8	37.1
Never married	628	926	19.6	19.7	6.1	5.6	32.9	31.2
Educational Attainment								
Less than high school	907	1,647	28.1	22.5	6.3	5.6	28.3	30.0
High school	1,802	2,966	15.1	10.0	7.5	6.3	40.0	40.1
College, 1 to 3 years	1,561	2,620	9.1	5.0	8.4	6.6	49.3	50.1
College, 4 or more years	1,507	2,143	4.7	2.4	12.0	8.3	68.7	63.4
Employment Status[4]								
Worked last month	3,144	4,986	10.6	6.7	9.0	6.7	50.0	47.6
Full-time	2,125	3,340	11.7	6.7	8.3	6.5	48.5	46.1
Part-time	1,018	1,646	8.3	6.8	10.6	7.5	53.2	50.6
Did not work last month	2,633	4,389	15.4	11.7	8.8	6.9	46.0	45.3
Occupation[5]								
Managerial-professional	903	1,349	3.8	2.2	10.8	7.5	64.1	55.9
Technical, sales, and administrative	1,195	1,772	8.7	6.5	8.4	6.5	48.8	46.6
Service occupations	427	781	22.2	13.5	8.5	6.0	39.6	40.0
Other	615	1,078	16.5	7.9	7.9	6.4	38.6	44.1

[1]Statistics are based only on those children reported as being read to one or more times per week and for whom valid answers are reported.

[2]Hispanics may be of any race.

[3]Married includes married, spouse present and married, spouse absent (excluding separated).

[4]Full-time includes those who usually work 35 or more hours per week; part-time includes those who usually work 1 to 34 hours per week; those who did not work last month include individuals who are unemployed or are not in the labor force.

[5]Excludes those who work in the armed forces.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Table 6.
Reading to Children—Characteristics of Families and Households: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Age of child		Family reading practices					
			Percent never read to last week		Average times read to child per week[1]		Percent of children read to seven or more times per week	
	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years
Total	5,777	9,375	12.8	9.1	8.9	6.8	48.2	46.5
Monthly Family Income								
Under $1,500	1,450	2,519	22.5	17.3	6.5	5.6	32.7	34.4
$1,500 to $2,999	1,701	2,525	11.8	9.8	8.9	6.6	47.7	43.4
$3,000 to $4,499	1,232	1,993	11.2	5.3	9.1	7.0	49.2	48.9
$4,500 and over	1,356	2,291	4.9	2.5	11.0	7.9	64.7	61.2
Income not reported	37	47	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Poverty Level								
Below poverty level	1,235	2,230	24.0	19.5	6.3	5.5	31.8	32.5
On or above poverty level	4,505	7,097	9.7	5.8	9.6	7.1	52.8	50.9
100 to 199 percent of poverty	1,389	2,236	14.4	9.4	7.8	6.6	42.7	43.7
200 percent of poverty or higher	3,116	4,860	7.5	4.1	10.3	7.3	57.2	54.3
Income not reported	37	47	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Tenure								
Owns home	3,092	5,359	7.0	4.8	10.1	7.3	56.6	53.2
Rents home	3,460	3,707	19.7	15.2	7.2	5.9	38.7	37.7
Other arrangements	224	309	18.3	9.5	8.7	5.7	35.7	36.5
Region of Residence								
Northeast	1,112	1,697	9.1	10.3	9.4	7.0	51.7	48.4
Midwest	1,444	2,377	8.4	4.0	9.8	6.6	53.7	48.2
South	1,894	3,024	13.8	7.8	7.9	6.4	45.2	45.7
West	1,326	2,277	19.3	15.1	9.0	7.3	43.4	44.6
Metropolitan Residence								
Metropolitan	4,535	7,346	14.2	10.6	9.0	6.9	48.6	46.7
In central cities	1,736	2,904	19.9	16.0	8.6	6.3	41.7	38.5
Outside central cities	2,799	4,442	10.7	7.1	9.2	7.2	52.8	52.2
Nonmetropolitan	1,242	2,029	7.7	3.4	8.6	6.3	46.6	45.8
Neighborhood Context[2]								
High opinion	1,396	2,434	6.4	2.5	9.7	7.4	57.8	57.2
Medium opinion	1,885	3,086	11.5	7.5	8.8	6.8	45.4	45.2
Low opinion	2,048	3,272	16.9	14.6	8.6	6.3	44.0	40.4
Neighborhood context not reported	449	583	19.4	14.0	8.3	6.2	48.7	43.7

B Base too small to show derived statistic.

[1]Statistics are based only on those children reported as being read to one or more times per week and for whom valid answers are reported.

[2]Average composite score based on a scale of 0 to 10 of several questions related to neighborhood characteristics with 10 being the best rated level. See text for specifics on the items included in the variable. Score for parent applied to each individual child in the family.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

old were read to 8.9 times per week compared with 6.8 times for children 3 to 5 years old (about once a day). Overall, about one-half of children 1 to 5 years old were read to 7 or more times per week.

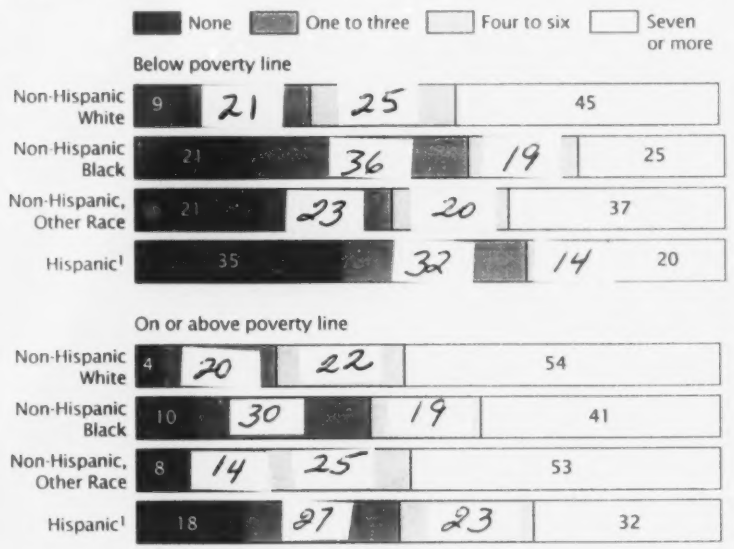
Highly educated and employed parents provide higher levels of reading interaction.

Children whose parents had 4 or more years of college are read to more frequently than children whose parents have fewer years of schooling. Table 5 shows that among children whose parents had 4 or more years of college, 69 percent of children 1 and 2 years old and 63 percent of children 3 to 5 years old were read to seven or more times per week. For children whose parents graduated high school, the comparable statistics are 40 percent for both age groups. The percentages are even lower for

Figure 4.

Times per Week Children 3 to 5 Years Old Are Read to by Parents by Race of Child and Poverty Status: Fall 1994

(Percent distribution)



[1]Hispanic may be of any race.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

parents who did not graduate high school -- 28 percent of children 1 and 2 years old and 30 percent of children 3 to 5 years old were read to seven or more times per week.

Parents employed part-time may have more time to read to their children, especially if they altered their work schedule to spend more time with their children. For 3- to 5-year olds whose parents worked part-time, about half (51 percent) were read to seven or more times per week, compared with 46 percent of children whose parents worked full-time. Similar differences were found for children 1 and 2 years old. For both age groups, children whose parents were not employed — who, on average, have less education — experienced less reading interaction with their parents (higher proportions never read to) than did children whose parents were employed.

Half of children living with married parents are read to seven or more times per week.

The amount of parent-child reading interaction depends not only on the interest and time available to each parent but also on the number of parents in the household to share their time with their children. Children living in single-parent households are at a disadvantage on this count — 52 percent of children 1 and 2 years old who had married parents were read to seven or more times per week compared with 33 percent each for children living with never-married parents or separated, divorced or widowed parents (see Table 5). At ages 3 to 5 years, critical preschool years when children start to develop reading skills, 50 percent of children living with married parents were read to as much as seven or more times per week — again, more than children of unmarried parents (31 percent).

Children living at or above the poverty level are read to more often than children below the poverty level.

Over half of children 1 to 5 years old who were living at or above the poverty level were read to seven or more times per week (see Table 6). Only one-third of those children living below the poverty level were read to as often. These proportions are similar for both younger and older age groups. Figure 4 also shows that regardless of race or Hispanic origin, children 3 to 5 years old were read to more frequently (seven or more times per week) if they were living at or above the poverty level than below.[12] For children these ages, differences in reading frequency between non-Hispanic White and non-Hispanic Black children were less for families above the poverty level (54 percent and 41 percent, respectively) than for families below the poverty level (45 percent and 25 percent, respectively).

Differences in reading interaction are also related to the income level of their family — over 60 percent of children in the highest income group ($4,500 and over per month) were read to seven or more times per week compared with only one-third of children living in families in the lowest income group (less than $1,500 per month). These data show that children in families with

[12]Hispanics may be of any race.

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greater economic resources receive significantly higher levels of parent-child reading interaction in their formative preschool years.

Family Rules About Television

The majority of children have family rules about television (TV).

In fall 1994, 88 percent of children 3 to 17 years old (41.2 million) lived in households with at least one type of family TV rule — 91 percent of 3- to 5-year olds and 95 percent of 6- to 11-year olds were subject to TV rules (see Table 8). In comparison, only 79 percent of children 12 to 17 years old were living in families with TV rules.

The majority of children under 12 years of age lived in families with rules for all three dimensions of TV viewing: type of program, time of day, and number of hours watched (see Table 7). Among 12- to 17-year olds, only 4 out of 10 experienced all three types of family TV rules for children. Possibly, older children may be perceived by their parents as being able to make their own choices on TV programs, times of day, and hours watched as they gain maturity and responsibility with age.

Approximately 25 percent of children 3 to 11 years old and 23 percent of children 12 to 17 years old lived in families that had two types of TV rules. The most likely combination included rules on the type of program watched and the time of day the TV was viewed. Among children 12 to 17 years old, the most frequently imposed type of TV rule concerns the time of day programs are watched, perhaps because of parental concerns over homework and after-school activities (see Figure 5).

Table 7.
Existence of TV Rules for Type of Program, Number of Hours Watched, and Time of Day Viewed by Age Group of Child: Fall 1994

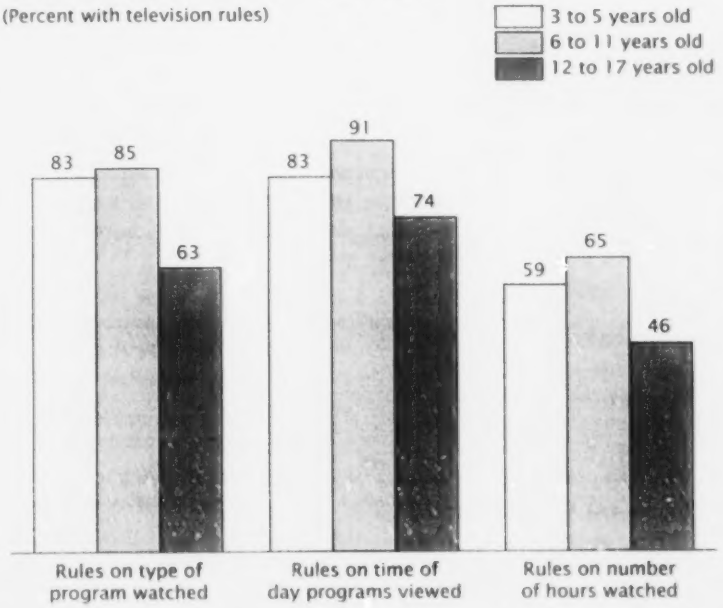
(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years
Total	9,576	19,472	17,683
Percent with rules:			
No rules	8.7	5.3	20.8
One rule only	12.2	9.0	15.9
Type of program	5.7	2.1	3.6
Number of hours watched	0.3	0.4	0.6
Time of day viewed	6.2	6.4	11.7
Two types of rules	25.2	25.3	23.2
Type of program and number of hours watched	2.1	0.8	1.0
Type of program and time of day viewed	20.4	21.3	17.8
Number of hours watched and time of day viewed	2.6	3.2	4.4
All three types of rules	54.0	60.3	40.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Figure 5.
Children With Television Rules by Type of Rule and Age of Child: Fall 1994

(Percent with television rules)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Table 8.
Family Television Rules—Characteristics of Children and Parents: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Age of child			Family television rules[1]					
				Percent with at least one television rule			Percent with three types of television rules		
	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years
Total	9,576	19,472	17,683	91.3	94.7	79.2	54.0	60.3	40.2
CHILD									
Sex									
Female	4,653	9,502	8,615	90.7	94.4	79.0	54.1	60.3	40.4
Male	4,923	9,970	9,067	91.9	94.9	79.5	53.9	60.4	40.0
Race/Ethnicity									
Non-Hispanic White	6,613	13,244	11,985	93.0	96.3	80.2	53.3	59.3	37.6
Non-Hispanic Black	1,153	2,631	2,383	93.0	94.3	80.2	57.9	67.1	47.5
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	409	730	710	89.5	92.1	76.4	58.1	58.1	38.4
Hispanic[2]	1,401	2,867	2,604	82.5	88.1	74.6	52.7	59.7	45.6
PARENT									
Sex									
Female	9,324	18,733	16,631	91.3	94.6	80.0	54.2	60.4	40.9
Male	252	739	1,052	91.0	95.6	67.1	48.5	59.1	28.8
Race/Ethnicity									
Non-Hispanic White	6,598	13,258	12,112	92.8	96.3	80.3	53.1	59.1	37.5
Non-Hispanic Black	1,088	2,540	2,279	92.9	94.1	80.4	58.5	67.5	48.2
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	428	748	688	90.5	92.3	74.9	58.6	60.0	38.6
Hispanic[2]	1,462	2,925	2,603	83.6	88.3	74.7	53.5	59.7	45.9
Marital Status									
Married[3]	7,474	14,127	12,706	91.9	95.2	80.7	54.8	61.1	41.1
Separated, divorced, widowed	1,126	3,690	4,085	91.8	94.7	76.7	57.4	61.1	38.6
Never married	977	1,655	891	86.3	89.5	70.2	43.8	51.9	33.7
Educational Attainment									
Less than high school	1,679	3,388	3,407	81.3	86.1	73.7	45.5	51.2	38.5
High school	3,060	6,756	6,228	91.5	95.6	78.2	47.8	57.0	37.9
College, 1 to 3 years	2,669	5,211	4,642	93.3	96.4	81.5	57.5	62.8	40.9
College, 4 or more years	2,168	4,117	3,406	96.3	98.1	83.6	65.1	70.2	45.1
Employment Status[4]									
Worked last month	5,042	12,073	12,470	91.5	95.6	78.5	54.8	60.2	38.2
Full-time	3,389	8,285	9,032	91.1	95.4	77.3	54.4	60.4	37.3
Part-time	1,652	3,788	3,437	92.4	95.9	81.5	55.7	59.7	40.7
Did not work last month	4,535	7,400	5,213	91.1	93.2	81.1	53.1	60.6	44.8
Occupation[5]									
Managerial-professional	1,362	3,001	3,079	94.7	97.7	82.6	59.6	66.2	41.5
Technical, sales, and administrative	1,792	4,407	4,533	89.9	95.9	78.4	53.4	58.6	36.9
Service occupations	797	1,929	2,064	90.1	93.7	80.0	52.9	57.4	39.7
Other	1,084	2,705	2,775	91.1	94.0	73.0	52.8	57.6	35.6

[1]Percentages are based only on those children for whom valid answers were reported.
[2]Hispanics may be of any race.
[3]Married includes married, spouse present and married, spouse absent (excluding separated).
[4]Full-time includes those who usually work 35 or more hours per week; part-time includes those who usually work 1 to 34 hours per week; those who did not work last month include individuals who are unemployed or not in the labor force.
[5]Excludes those who work in the armed forces.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

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Children living with never-married parents are less likely to have family TV rules.

Children 3 to 5 years old living with never-married parents were somewhat less likely to have at least one type of family TV rule (86 percent) than children with married parents or with separated, divorced, or widowed parents (92 percent each — see Table 6). The first group was also less likely to have all three types of TV rules (44 percent) than were children living in families with either married or formerly married parents (55 and 57 percent, respectively). A similar pattern exists for children 6 to 11 years old — about 52 percent of children with never-married parents had all three types of TV rules compared with 61 percent for children with either married parents or with separated, divorced, or widowed parents.

The frequency of imposing TV family rules is consistently lower for adolescents, but differences by the marital status of the parent still persist. About 70 percent of children of never-married parents had at least one family rule, compared with 81 percent of children of married parents and 77 percent of children with separated, divorced, or widowed parents. When examining the proportion of children with three types of family TV rules by marital status, children of never-married parents had a lower level of TV supervision than children of married parents (34 percent and 41 percent respectively).

TV rules reflect parental educational levels.

Although the vast majority of children experience some type of limitation on viewing TV, children are more likely to experience these rules as the educational levels of the parents increase (see Table 8), particularly for the youngest age group. Although a high proportion of 3- to 5-year olds whose parents had less than a high school education had at least one TV rule (81 percent), an even higher proportion of children whose parents had completed 4 or more years of college had at least one TV rule (96 percent). Only a 10 percentage point difference existed between these groups for 12- to 17-year olds (74 percent and 84 percent, respectively).

For both 3- to 5-year olds and 6- to 11-year olds, children whose parents had 4 or more years of college had significantly higher levels of TV regulation (three types of TV rules) than children whose parents had less than a high school education (a 20 percentage point difference for both age groups). For children 12 to 17 years old, the difference persists but was smaller between the lowest and highest education levels (7 percentage points).

Table 9.
Parent-Child Interactions: Times Spent Reading to Children 3 to 5 Years Old by Presence of Television Rules and Educational Level of Parent: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	Television rules		
		No rules	1 or 2 types of rules	All 3 types of rules
Total	9,245	784	3,474	4,987
Percent of children read to:				
Not at all	9.0	23.3	9.0	6.8
1 to 6 times per week	44.4	48.6	48.9	40.6
7 or more times per week	46.6	28.2	42.1	52.6
Children with designated parent with 4 or more years of college[1]	2,116	80	669	1,367
Percent of children read to:				
Not at all	2.4	6.6	1.6	2.6
1 to 6 times per week	34.4	38.0	40.9	31.1
7 or more times per week	63.1	55.4	57.6	66.3

[1]Includes only those with valid answers for both television rules and reading interaction questions.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Children with three types of TV rules tend to have more reading interaction with their parents.

Do parents who exercise stricter control over their children's TV viewing habits spend more time reading to their children than parents who are more lenient in setting TV rules? More than one-half of children 3 to 5 years old who have three types of television rules are read to by their parents seven or more times per week (see Table 9). For children living in families with no TV rules, only 28 percent are read to by their parents seven or more time per week — in fact, 23 percent of these children were not read to by their parents in the week preceding the survey.

Among children of college-educated parents, the majority of children are read to seven or more times per week, regardless of the limitations on TV viewing. It may be that more highly educated par-

Table 10.
Family Television Rules—Characteristics of Families and Households: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Age of child			Family television rules[1]					
				Percent with at least one television rule			Percent with three types of television rules		
	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years
Total	9,576	19,472	17,683	91.3	94.7	79.2	54.0	60.3	40.2
Monthly Family Income									
Under $1,500	2,584	4,735	3,675	89.2	91.7	78.2	50.5	57.7	43.2
$1,500 to $2,999	2,558	5,234	4,669	89.8	93.5	77.8	53.4	58.8	40.0
$3,000 to $4,499	2,066	4,421	3,816	93.2	96.4	80.6	58.2	60.9	38.7
$4,500 and over	2,316	4,976	5,433	93.9	97.1	79.9	54.9	63.6	39.2
Income not reported	52	106	90	(B)	94.0	(B)	(B)	80.2	(B)
Poverty Level									
Below poverty level	2,281	4,217	3,188	87.9	90.4	77.5	51.0	57.4	45.8
On or above poverty level	7,243	15,149	14,404	92.4	95.9	79.5	55.0	61.0	38.9
100 to 199 percent of poverty	2,288	4,755	3,987	91.1	94.0	79.7	54.9	59.9	41.1
200 percent of poverty or higher	4,955	10,394	10,417	93.1	96.7	79.4	55.0	61.5	38.0
Income not reported	52	106	90	(B)	94.0	(B)	(B)	80.2	(B)
Tenure									
Owns home	5,484	11,911	11,937	92.7	96.0	79.8	54.7	59.9	39.3
Rents home	3,780	6,930	5,263	89.3	92.4	78.0	52.8	61.7	42.5
Other arrangement	313	632	483	93.0	94.1	78.9	56.4	54.2	36.7
Region of Residence									
Northeast	1,722	3,642	3,324	92.3	95.8	76.8	60.5	64.9	43.4
Midwest	2,426	4,616	4,375	89.9	94.5	79.4	47.1	54.2	34.6
South	3,101	6,481	6,281	92.3	95.4	80.3	54.5	62.0	41.9
West	2,327	4,733	3,703	90.8	93.0	79.5	55.7	60.6	40.9
Metropolitan Residence									
Metropolitan	7,550	15,105	13,226	90.8	94.6	78.7	54.9	61.5	41.5
In central cities	3,022	5,857	4,932	89.0	93.8	79.7	54.8	61.9	45.8
Outside central cities	4,528	9,248	8,294	92.0	95.0	78.1	55.0	61.2	39.0
Nonmetropolitan	2,026	4,367	4,457	93.3	95.0	80.9	50.6	56.5	36.2
Neighborhood Context[2]									
High opinion	2,439	5,696	5,357	94.6	96.8	81.7	55.9	62.0	43.2
Medium opinion	3,160	6,586	5,893	91.1	94.9	80.3	54.6	59.1	38.5
Low opinion	3,343	6,105	5,289	89.7	92.9	77.0	52.7	60.4	40.8
Neighborhood context not reported	634	1,086	1,143	88.3	92.0	73.0	50.5	58.8	31.9

B Base too small to show derived statistic.

[1]Percentages are based only on those children for whom valid answers were reported.

[2]Average composite score based on a scale of 0 to 10 of several questions related to neighborhood characteristics with 10 being the best rated level. See text for specifics on the items included in the variable. Score for parent applied to each individual child in the family.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

ents realize the value of developing reading skills at an early age regardless of how strictly they control their children's viewing habits.

PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In this report, participation in extracurricular activities is based on parents' responses to questions about children's involvement in sports, clubs, and lessons. This multifaceted examination, including activities other than attending classes, provides a more complete picture of academic experiences than considering the measurement of grades alone. It is important to examine these activities as they constitute important components of child development and can influence how a child makes the transition to adulthood.

One-half of school-age children participate in extracurricular activities.

Nationally, 50 percent of children 6 to 17 years old (23.3 million) in

Table 11.
Extracurricular Activities of School Age Children—Characteristics of Children and Parents: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Type of extracurricular activity[1]											
	Participation in sports				Participation in clubs				Enrolled in lessons			
	6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years		6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years		6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years	
	Number	Percent participating	Number	Percent participating	Number	Percent participating	Number	Percent participating	Number	Percent enrolled	Number	Percent enrolled
Total	19,426	34.3	17,665	42.2	19,438	38.8	17,638	42.5	19,451	23.7	17,665	19.1
CHILD												
Sex												
Female	9,458	25.5	8,591	35.1	9,477	40.8	8,585	47.1	9,465	30.9	8,605	24.7
Male	9,968	42.5	9,074	49.0	9,961	36.9	9,054	38.2	9,986	16.9	9,060	13.8
Race/Ethnicity												
Non-Hispanic White	13,214	41.1	11,999	47.0	13,240	45.1	11,978	48.6	13,219	27.1	11,994	21.1
Non-Hispanic Black	2,615	17.2	2,379	35.3	2,623	28.4	2,374	33.1	2,625	15.2	2,373	14.3
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	729	26.6	710	34.0	727	32.6	717	39.4	728	36.9	719	26.8
Hispanic[2]	2,868	20.2	2,577	29.0	2,848	20.6	2,569	23.8	2,879	12.6	2,579	12.3
PARENT												
Sex												
Female	18,692	34.2	16,606	42.5	18,703	39.1	16,588	43.0	18,710	23.9	16,615	19.3
Male	734	35.8	1,059	38.2	736	32.3	1,050	35.8	741	20.2	1,049	17.5
Race/Ethnicity												
Non-Hispanic White	13,239	41.0	12,127	46.9	13,265	45.3	12,107	48.4	13,245	27.1	12,122	21.1
Non-Hispanic Black	2,525	16.7	2,274	35.3	2,531	28.0	2,269	33.8	2,533	15.4	2,268	14.3
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	739	27.4	687	34.7	736	32.1	695	38.0	737	36.5	697	26.6
Hispanic[2]	2,923	20.8	2,577	28.5	2,907	20.2	2,568	23.9	2,937	12.6	2,578	12.4
Marital Status												
Married[3]	14,087	38.7	12,674	45.9	14,112	42.0	12,654	46.4	14,105	26.7	12,675	21.0
Separated, divorced, widowed	3,685	26.8	4,091	34.4	3,679	31.9	4,082	35.4	3,694	17.5	4,090	15.1
Never married	1,654	13.2	900	26.0	1,647	26.2	902	20.3	1,662	12.5	899	11.3
Educational Attainment												
Less than high school	3,398	15.5	3,415	24.7	3,404	18.0	3,403	21.3	3,419	9.5	3,413	10.0
High school	6,754	31.4	6,222	41.1	6,747	35.5	6,225	38.8	6,757	17.9	6,219	15.1
College, 1 to 3 years	5,202	36.7	4,637	45.7	5,207	45.2	4,629	48.0	5,193	23.9	4,639	21.0
College, 4 or more years	4,072	51.4	3,391	57.2	4,081	53.5	3,381	63.1	4,081	45.1	3,393	33.3
Employment Status[4]												
Worked last month	12,039	38.4	12,460	45.6	12,063	41.6	12,436	44.7	12,047	25.4	12,451	20.3
Full-time	8,262	37.0	9,030	44.5	8,280	39.7	9,013	43.4	8,279	23.7	9,020	19.6
Part-time	3,778	41.6	3,430	48.3	3,783	45.7	3,423	48.1	3,768	29.1	3,431	22.1
Did not work last month	7,387	27.5	5,205	34.3	7,375	34.3	5,203	37.4	7,404	20.9	5,213	16.5
Occupation[5]												
Managerial-professional	3,008	48.4	3,114	56.6	3,021	49.4	3,114	57.1	3,012	37.5	3,106	27.1
Technical, sales, and administrative	4,532	41.1	4,601	46.6	4,538	43.0	4,591	45.6	4,534	24.9	4,596	20.0
Service occupations	2,011	27.0	2,116	37.8	2,012	32.3	2,109	33.0	2,007	14.4	2,118	14.3
Other	2,837	30.5	2,875	37.1	2,839	36.3	2,868	36.4	2,844	20.0	2,874	16.9

[1]Percentages are based only on those children for whom valid answers were reported. Children may participate in more than one type of activity, and the participation rates do not add to 100 percent. Each activity is shown independent of participation in the others.

[2]Hispanics may be of any race.

[3]Married includes married, spouse present and married, spouse absent (excluding separated).

[4]Full-time includes those who usually work 35 or more hours per week; part-time includes those who usually work 1 to 34 hours per week; did not work last month includes individuals who are unemployed or are not in the labor force.

[5]Excludes those who work in the armed forces.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

1994 participated in at least one of the three extracurricular activities asked about by the SIPP — sports, clubs, and after school or weekend lessons. Children 12 to 17 years old were more likely to participate in sports activities than children 6 to 11 years old. Older children may have more opportunities to participate and take leadership roles and be exposed to team competition once out of elementary school (see Table 11).

This age pattern of participation is reversed for enrollment in lessons — 24 percent of younger children participate in lessons compared with 19 percent of older children. Older children may have more voice in what, if any, lessons they take or may cease to participate in lessons that no longer interest them. Older children may also have more school-based activities available to them than do younger children which may reduce their need for instructional lessons such as music lessons outside of the school curriculum.

Table 11 shows that girls are more likely than boys to participate in clubs and lessons. Among children 6 to 11 years old, 41 percent of girls and 37 percent of boys participated in clubs, while 31 percent of girls and 17 percent of boys were enrolled in lessons. In contrast, boys are much more likely to be involved in sports activities than girls — one-quarter of girls 6 to 11 years old participate in sports compared with more than 4 out of every 10 boys. Higher participation rates in sports activities are also noted for boys 12 to 17 years old. To the extent that involvement in clubs or lessons provides different interactive experiences with other children and adults than involvement in sports activities, children's patterned participation by gender may prepare boys and girls differently for the future.

Activity rates for sports, clubs, and lessons are higher among non-Hispanic White children than either non-Hispanic Black, or Hispanic children for both age groups. Activity rates for lessons are highest for children of non-Hispanic, Other Races (mostly Asian) than for children in any of the other race or ethnic groups.

Household structure and parental time shape children's involvement in extracurricular activities.

Participation was consistently higher across all three types of extracurricular activities for children in married-couple families. For example, among children 12 to 17 years old, 46 percent with married parents participated in sports, compared with 34 percent of children with separated, divorced, or widowed parents, and 26 percent of children with never-married parents (see Table 11). Children with fewer parents present may have more household responsibilities, leaving them with less time for involvement outside of school or the families, which typically have lower incomes, may not be able to afford them.

Parental employment is related to the time a parent has to help a child participate in activities, interest in having the child occupied with others, including adults, and the financial resources that may contribute toward participation in these activities. In general, children's participation in activities is higher when their parents worked in the last month than when they did not work (see Table 11).

However, among 6- to 11-year olds with employed parents, children had higher extracurricular activity rates if their parents worked part-time rather than full-time. Separate analyses also showed that 78 percent of part-time working parents had spouses who also worked. Part-time working parents may have more time away from work to oversee and coordinate their children's involvement. In fact, they may choose to work part-time to increase their participatory involvement with their children in extracurricular activities (for example, scouts or sports activities).

Children living in more economically advantaged households are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities.

Participation in organized activities takes not only parental time but often requires significant monetary expenditures, especially in the case of lessons. The data in Table 12 indicate that children in higher income families are more likely to participate in all three extracurricular activities. For example, among children living in families whose monthly income was less than $1,500, enrollment in lessons was only about 12 percent for children either 6 to 11 or 12 to 17 years old. Among children living in families whose monthly income exceeded $4,500, enrollment tripled to 39 percent for younger children and doubled to 28 percent for the older children. Figure 6 shows that participation in activities is higher among children living in families with monthly incomes at or above 200 percent of the poverty line than among children living in families with monthly incomes below the poverty line. In addition to being able to afford more activities

Table 12.
Extracurricular Activities of School Age Children—Characteristics of Families and Households: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Type of extracurricular activity[1]											
	Participation in sports				Participation in clubs				Enrolled in lessons			
	6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years		6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years		6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years	
	Number	Percent participating	Number	Percent participating	Number	Percent participating	Number	Percent participating	Number	Percent enrolled	Number	Percent enrolled
Total	19,426	34.3	17,665	42.2	19,438	38.8	17,638	42.5	19,451	23.7	17,665	19.1
Monthly Family Income												
Under $1,500	4,721	16.4	3,654	25.9	4,703	25.1	3,664	28.0	4,731	12.9	3,667	11.5
$1,500 to $2,999	5,238	29.6	4,641	38.2	5,239	33.4	4,652	36.4	5,243	17.4	4,651	14.9
$3,000 to $4,499	4,414	40.0	3,812	45.0	4,425	46.1	3,793	46.3	4,417	25.9	3,801	19.5
$4,500 and over	4,956	51.3	5,471	54.8	4,974	51.0	5,444	55.1	4,962	39.0	5,459	27.8
Income not reported	98	(B)	87	(B)	98	(B)	85	(B)	98	(B)	87	(B)
Poverty Level												
Below poverty level	4,201	14.8	3,182	26.2	4,190	23.2	3,188	25.8	4,218	11.9	3,192	10.5
On or above poverty level	15,128	39.7	14,395	45.8	15,150	43.1	14,364	46.3	15,135	27.1	14,385	21.1
100 to 199 percent of poverty	4,746	27.9	3,946	35.7	4,744	34.7	3,955	35.1	4,745	15.3	3,953	14.2
200 percent of poverty or higher	10,382	45.1	10,450	49.6	10,406	47.0	10,409	50.6	10,390	32.4	10,432	23.7
Income not reported	98	(B)	87	(B)	98	(B)	85	(B)	98	(B)	87	(B)
Tenure												
Owns home	11,883	42.2	11,934	47.7	11,915	44.8	11,911	48.1	11,890	29.5	11,937	21.5
Rents home	6,909	21.9	5,248	30.4	6,889	29.2	5,247	30.3	6,927	14.9	5,247	14.0
Other arrangements	634	20.9	483	37.0	634	29.8	481	38.0	634	12.3	480	16.0
Region of Residence												
Northeast	3,688	38.8	3,348	45.7	3,674	41.4	3,342	44.7	3,672	29.0	3,358	23.5
Midwest	4,593	37.8	4,379	48.9	4,583	46.5	4,369	46.4	4,582	24.8	4,360	19.8
South	6,423	31.5	6,244	37.2	6,462	36.3	6,242	40.7	6,473	20.7	6,254	16.8
West	4,722	30.1	3,693	39.6	4,720	32.7	3,685	39.1	4,724	22.6	3,693	18.4
Metropolitan Residence												
Metropolitan	15,078	34.4	13,198	41.7	15,079	38.3	13,177	42.9	15,099	25.1	13,199	20.5
In central cities	5,841	26.3	4,918	34.4	5,830	32.6	4,896	36.0	5,871	22.5	4,901	17.3
Outside central cities	9,238	39.6	8,279	46.0	9,249	41.9	8,281	46.9	9,228	26.7	8,298	22.4
Nonmetropolitan	4,348	33.7	4,467	43.9	4,360	40.5	4,461	41.6	4,352	19.0	4,465	15.1
Neighborhood Context[2]												
High opinion	5,682	45.0	5,374	52.8	5,703	47.2	5,358	50.3	5,673	30.0	5,355	24.5
Medium opinion	6,572	37.2	5,902	43.6	6,592	42.9	5,893	46.1	6,592	25.6	5,914	19.5
Low opinion	6,103	21.4	5,267	30.9	6,078	27.3	5,259	32.1	6,109	16.3	5,266	13.9
Neighborhood context not reported	1,070	32.4	1,121	38.0	1,065	34.1	1,129	35.6	1,078	21.0	1,129	16.2

B Base too small to show derived statistic.

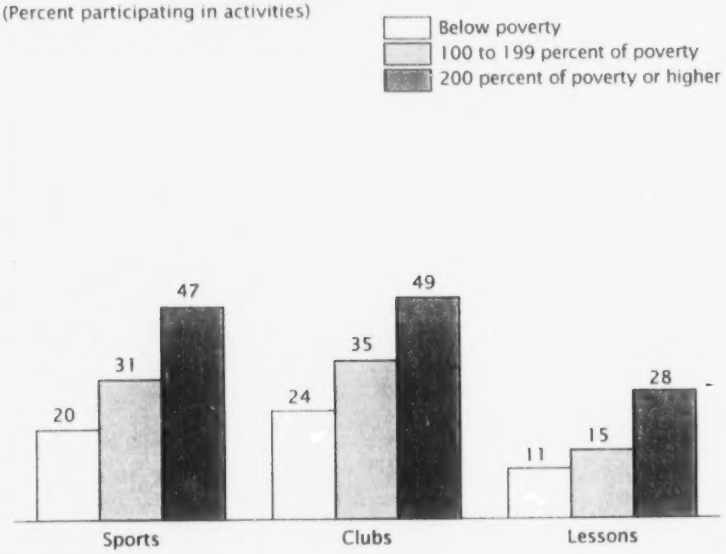
[1]Percentages are based only on those children for whom valid answers were reported.

[2]Average composite score based on a scale of 0 to 10 of several questions related to neighborhood characteristics with 10 being the best rated level. See text for specifics on the items included in the variable. Score for parent applied to each individual child in the family.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Figure 6.
Children 6 to 17 Years Old Participating in Extracurricular Activities by Family Poverty Status: Fall 1994

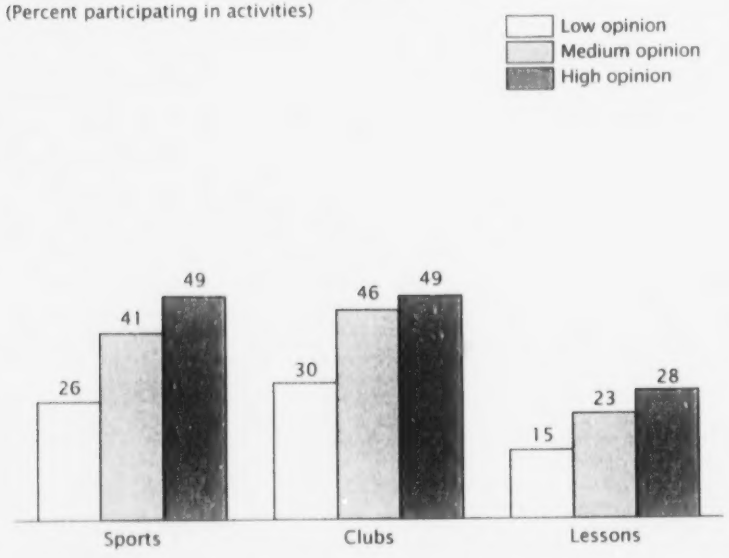
(Percent participating in activities)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Figure 7.
Children 6 to 17 Years Old Participating in Extracurricular Activities by Parent's Assessment of the Neighborhood: Fall 1994

(Percent participating in activities)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

and lessons for their children, economically advantaged families may live in neighborhoods where school activities are more readily available.

Households with higher incomes are generally located in better neighborhoods. School-age children are more likely to participate in sports, clubs, and lessons when parents have a high opinion of the safety of their neighborhood (Figure 7). Characteristics such as parental marital status, family income, housing, and neighborhood quality are certainly inter-related and should be considered when evaluating the participation levels of extracurricular activities. This report presents the broad picture of a child's daily activities and does not analyze in detail the independent contribution of each parental characteristic to the child's degree of participation in different activities.

Overall, the SIPP data suggest that participation in extracurricular activities may not be an option for many children in single-parent or low income households or where parents are uneasy about the safety of their neighborhood. The data from this particular survey cannot show whether extracurricular participation has led to academic success or whether academically successful students are more inclined to participate. The following section, however, explores current indicators of academic achievement among school-age children.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Children's academic achievement in this report is analyzed by considering outcomes such as changing schools, repeating grades, being academically "on-track" — enrolled in school at or above the modal

Table 13.
Academic Achievement of School Age Children—Characteristics of Children and Parents: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Indicators of academic achievement[1]											
	Change of schools				Ever repeated a grade				Gifted classes[2]		Ever suspended[2]	
	6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years		6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years		6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	18,885	29.5	16,888	51.6	18,936	6.6	17,058	15.9	18,952	12.5	17,003	10.3
CHILD												
Sex												
Female	9,243	29.3	8,197	52.8	9,254	5.1	8,330	12.0	9,258	3.7	8,303	5.5
Male	9,642	29.7	8,691	50.4	9,682	8.0	8,728	19.7	9,694	11.4	8,700	14.9
Race/Ethnicity												
Non-Hispanic White	12,858	27.0	11,479	49.0	12,921	6.6	11,572	14.3	12,917	13.5	11,561	8.4
Non-Hispanic Black	2,547	36.8	2,242	52.5	2,559	8.3	2,282	25.1	2,551	13.1	2,272	19.9
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	712	30.9	685	68.5	706	2.9	706	13.0	714	10.2	703	6.5
Hispanic[3]	2,768	34.1	2,481	57.6	2,750	6.1	2,499	16.0	2,770	7.9	2,468	11.4
PARENT												
Sex												
Female	18,169	29.0	15,881	51.1	18,217	6.6	16,058	15.8	18,228	12.6	16,016	10.1
Male	715	42.0	1,007	59.6	719	5.1	1,000	18.3	724	11.1	988	13.4
Race/Ethnicity												
Non-Hispanic White	12,873	27.3	11,608	49.7	12,931	6.7	11,686	14.4	12,941	13.7	11,672	8.4
Non-Hispanic Black	2,454	35.4	2,146	51.5	2,467	8.3	2,186	25.1	2,458	12.7	2,176	20.2
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	736	31.2	654	65.4	729	2.0	689	13.4	726	12.0	689	7.3
Hispanic[3]	2,822	33.9	2,480	56.6	2,809	5.8	2,497	15.7	2,826	7.2	2,466	11.1
Marital Status												
Married[4]	13,732	26.7	12,143	49.1	13,764	5.6	12,287	13.2	13,783	13.3	12,260	7.8
Separated, divorced, widowed	3,561	39.9	3,916	59.6	3,604	9.7	3,928	21.5	3,581	10.6	3,898	14.6
Never married	1,592	30.4	829	48.9	1,569	8.0	843	28.9	1,589	9.7	845	25.7
Educational Attainment												
Less than high school	3,305	35.4	3,216	56.4	3,275	10.7	3,267	24.6	3,303	6.0	3,246	15.2
High school	6,515	28.7	5,970	46.5	6,545	7.1	6,000	15.5	6,548	9.4	5,988	10.1
College, 1 to 3 years	5,057	28.5	4,417	54.3	5,081	6.3	4,475	16.0	5,075	14.1	4,466	10.5
College, 4 or more years	4,007	27.3	3,285	52.4	4,036	2.8	3,316	8.1	4,026	20.9	3,304	5.5
Employment Status[5]												
Worked last month	11,775	28.3	11,930	49.4	11,799	5.7	12,042	14.6	11,790	13.8	12,003	9.6
Full-time	8,073	29.5	8,608	50.8	8,084	5.6	8,680	14.9	8,097	13.1	8,647	9.9
Part-time	3,702	25.8	3,323	46.0	3,715	6.0	3,362	13.7	3,693	15.4	3,357	8.7
Did not work last month	7,110	31.4	4,958	56.6	7,137	8.0	5,016	19.1	7,162	10.3	5,000	11.9
Occupation[6]												
Managerial-professional	2,960	25.4	2,976	49.4	2,976	3.0	3,005	9.2	2,969	19.9	3,000	5.3
Technical, sales, and administrative	4,461	28.5	4,415	47.5	4,434	5.4	4,453	13.1	4,429	13.5	4,450	9.2
Service occupations	1,974	30.6	2,001	52.6	1,984	9.0	2,031	20.0	1,989	10.6	2,022	13.6
Other	2,722	30.1	2,745	50.5	2,743	7.4	2,780	19.0	2,746	10.2	2,759	11.9

[1]Percentages are based only on those children for whom valid answers were reported.
[2]Gifted question asked of children 6 to 11 years and suspended question asked of children 12 to 17 years.
[3]Hispanics may be of any race.
[4]Married includes married, spouse present and married, spouse absent (excluding separated).
[5]Full-time includes those who usually work 35 or more hours per week; part-time includes those who usually work 1 to 34 hours per week; did not work last month includes individuals who are unemployed or are not in the labor force.
[6]Excludes those who work in the armed forces.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

grade level for their age, taking classes for gifted students, and being suspended.

Poor children and children from households with family disruptions are more likely to have changed schools.

Not including the normal progression and graduation from elementary and middle schools, 30 percent of 6- to 11-year olds and 52 percent of 12- to 17-year olds had changed schools at some time in their educational careers (see Table 13). Changing schools can be disruptive because children usually have to make new friends, adjust to new teachers, and become integrated into a different school setting and routine. A change in schools may have been prompted by a residential move, a change in school-district boundaries, failure at another school, or a change in the household structure or finances, such as caused by a separation or divorce of parents.

Children from families with incomes less than $1,500 per month were only somewhat more likely ever to have changed schools than children in families earning $1,500 or more. Among children 6 to 11 years old, 35 percent living in families with monthly incomes less than $1,500 had changed schools at least once compared with 28 percent of children in families earning $1,500 or more. Among 12- to 17-year olds, 57 percent of children in families with incomes less than $1,500 per month had changed schools compared with 50 percent of children in families earning $1,500 or more (see Table 14). A similar pattern of changing schools exists by the poverty level of the family, the parental opinion of the neighborhood, and the marital status of the parents — children in poor families and in neighborhoods held in relatively low opinion by their parents, as well as those whose parents are separated, divorced, or widowed, are more likely to have changed schools at some time in their academic past.

Girls are more likely to be academically "on-track."

One of the most important indicators of children's overall success in school is the timeliness of their promotion from grade to grade. Children are generally considered as being academically "on-track" when they are enrolled at or above the modal grade for their age (the grade at which most children of a given age are enrolled). Children who repeat a grade are not likely to be academically on-track.

Overall, 80 percent of children 6 to 11 years old are on-track compared with 69 percent of older children. Of course, younger children have been in school less time than older children and have had fewer educational and life experiences which may lead them to repeat a grade. For this reason, Table 15 presents children's on-track status only for children 12 to 17 years old.

A higher proportion of girls than boys were academically on-track (74 percent compared with 64 percent). About three-fourths of children of non-Hispanic, Other Races, predominantly Asian and Pacific Islanders, were academically on-track. Non-Hispanic White children (72 percent) were more likely to be academically on-track than non-Hispanic Black children and Hispanic children (61 percent and 65 percent, respectively).

Children with married, working parents are most likely to be academically on-track.

Parents serve as role models for their children. Children whose parents are employed may also be more aware of the need to work as adults and understand the connection between education and finding a good job. About three-quarters of children whose parents were both married and employed were academically on-track (see Table 15). Among children from married-couple households with only one working parent, 69 percent were on-track compared with 56 percent of children from married-couple households with no employed parents. Similarly, among children in single-parent households, those with an employed parent generally progressed more steadily in school (67 percent on-track) than those without an employed parent (55 percent on-track). Children raised with two parents in their household may also be more likely to benefit from more attention from both parents in addition to higher levels of family income that can provide more resources — such as tutors and lessons — which tend to keep children from falling behind in school.

Children involved in extracurricular activities are more likely to be academically on-track.

Table 15 shows that children who participate in extracurricular activities were more likely to be academically on-track — 75 percent among children who participate in at least one extracurricular activity compared with 60 percent among children who do not participate in any. Although it cannot be known

Table 14.
Academic Achievement of School Age Children—Characteristics of Families and Households: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Indicators of academic achievement[1]											
	Change of schools				Ever repeated a grade				Gifted classes[2]		Ever suspended[2]	
	6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years		6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years		6 to 11 years		12 to 17 years	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	19,885	29.5	16,888	51.6	18,936	6.6	17,058	15.9	18,952	12.5	17,003	10.3
Monthly Family Income												
Under $1,500	4,540	35.3	3,458	57.0	4,563	10.4	3,506	24.6	4,562	9.1	3,492	16.7
$1,500 to $2,999	5,074	28.9	4,463	52.1	5,098	6.9	4,457	18.5	5,108	10.0	4,447	11.9
$3,000 to $4,499	4,325	27.3	3,661	50.0	4,319	5.4	3,704	13.4	4,303	12.0	3,684	7.8
$4,500 and over	4,855	26.6	5,216	48.4	4,862	3.5	5,299	9.3	4,885	18.7	5,291	6.1
Income not reported	92	(B)	90	(B)	95	(B)	93	(B)	95	(B)	89	(B)
Poverty Level												
Below poverty level	4,031	35.7	3,007	58.4	4,055	11.0	3,064	24.4	4,050	8.0	3,063	17.0
On or above poverty level	14,762	27.8	13,791	50.0	14,786	5.3	13,902	13.9	14,807	13.8	13,852	8.7
100 to 199 percent of poverty	4,601	29.5	3,765	52.2	4,625	7.4	3,758	19.7	4,620	10.6	3,753	11.9
200 percent of poverty or higher	10,161	27.0	10,026	49.1	10,161	4.4	10,144	11.7	10,187	15.2	10,099	7.5
Income not reported	92	(B)	90	(B)	95	(B)	93	(B)	95	(B)	89	(B)
Tenure												
Owns home	11,599	24.0	11,457	45.9	11,638	5.3	11,564	13.2	11,602	13.9	11,517	8.0
Rents home	6,690	39.3	4,986	64.8	6,693	8.9	5,033	22.2	6,728	10.9	5,023	15.7
Other arrangements	595	27.0	445	49.9	605	5.9	461	17.2	604	5.1	463	8.7
Region of Residence												
Northeast	3,540	25.2	3,212	43.2	3,614	6.4	3,237	11.8	3,593	13.4	3,238	7.7
Midwest	4,491	26.7	4,169	49.1	4,461	6.2	4,194	14.7	4,461	12.2	4,203	10.0
South	6,264	31.2	5,953	53.9	6,295	8.7	6,030	21.1	6,289	13.4	5,991	11.4
West	4,590	33.3	3,553	58.1	4,567	4.2	3,596	12.4	4,608	10.9	3,572	11.1
Metropolitan Residence												
Metropolitan	14,637	30.7	12,590	54.9	14,682	6.0	12,740	14.8	14,695	12.9	12,668	9.9
In central cities	5,628	32.8	4,659	58.2	5,609	6.3	4,742	16.9	5,635	12.9	4,684	12.3
Outside central cities	9,009	29.3	7,930	53.0	9,073	5.8	7,998	13.6	9,059	12.9	7,984	8.6
Nonmetropolitan	4,248	25.5	4,298	41.7	4,255	8.6	4,318	19.1	4,257	11.3	4,335	11.2
Neighborhood Context[3]												
High opinion	5,561	25.3	5,146	45.0	5,575	5.5	5,178	13.5	5,572	14.9	5,190	7.6
Medium opinion	6,374	29.7	5,672	52.3	6,399	6.5	5,727	15.0	6,427	12.5	5,687	8.7
Low opinion	5,881	32.9	5,012	56.9	5,909	8.1	5,108	20.0	5,897	10.5	5,100	14.5
Neighborhood context not reported	1,070	31.3	1,059	54.6	1,052	4.4	1,045	13.3	1,056	11.7	1,027	11.6

B Base too small to show derived statistic.

[1]Percentages are based only on those children for whom valid answers were reported.

[2]Gifted question asked of children 6 to 11 years and suspended question asked of children 12 to 17 years.

[3]Average composite score based on a scale of 0 to 10 of several questions related to neighborhood characteristics with 10 being the best rated level. See text for specifics on the items included in the variable. Score for parent applied to each individual child in the family.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Table 15.
Children 12 to 17 Years Old Academically On-Track: Fall 1994

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic[1]	All children	Percent on-track
Total	18,118	69.3
Age of Child		
12 years	3,099	73.5
13 years	3,213	70.4
14 years	3,259	68.3
15 years	2,971	72.6
16 years	2,845	66.5
17 years	2,731	63.5
Sex of Child		
Female	8,849	74.4
Male	9,269	64.3
Race/Ethnicity of Child		
Non-Hispanic White	12,241	71.6
Non-Hispanic Black	2,448	60.8
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	741	74.6
Hispanic[2]	2,688	64.7
Marital and Work Status of Parents		
Married couple[3]	12,850	71.8
Both worked last month	8,513	74.2
One worked last month	3,776	68.8
Neither worked last month	561	56.4
Other marital status	5,268	63.0
Worked last month	3,588	66.7
Did not work last month	1,680	55.1
Poverty Level		
Below poverty	3,239	56.7
On or above poverty level	14,779	72.1
100 to 199 percent of poverty	4,072	66.2
200 percent of poverty or higher	10,707	74.3
Income not reported	100	(B)
Neighborhood Context		
High opinion	5,485	72.5
Medium opinion	5,983	70.9
Low opinion	5,385	64.8
Neighborhood context not reported	1,265	66.6
Participation in at Least One Extracurricular Activity		
Participated in an extracurricular activity	11,313	74.9
Did not participate in an extracurricular activity	6,805	59.9
Ever Changed Schools		
Changed schools	8,706	67.5
Did not change schools	8,179	73.2
Ever Suspended		
Suspended from school	1,746	55.0
Never suspended from school	15,255	71.8

B Base too small to show derived statistic.

[1]Characteristics of the designated parent and the age of child are as of survey date.
[2]Hispanics may be of any race.
[3]Includes only married, spouse present.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

from this analysis whether a causal relationship exists, participation in activities and success in school appear to go hand-in-hand.

Children who did not change schools were also more likely to be on-track (73 percent) than children who had changed schools (68 percent) at least once in their school careers. Suspension from school, which can be an indicator of emotional or adjustment problems experienced by a child, was also closely related to being academically on-track. Little more than one-half (55 percent) of 12- to 17-year olds who had been suspended from school were on-track compared with 72 percent of children who had never been suspended. In addition, children whose parents had a medium or high opinion of their neighborhood were more likely to be academically on-track, (71 percent and 73 percent respectively) than children whose parents had a low opinion of their neighborhood (65 percent).

Children from married-couple families are more likely to be enrolled in classes for gifted students and less likely to have been suspended.

Thirteen percent of children 6 to 11 years old with married parents were enrolled in classes for gifted students compared with about 10 percent of children whose parents were formerly married or never married (see Table 13). Moreover, 26 percent of 12- to 17-year olds whose parents had never been married had been suspended from school at least once, while only 8 percent of children whose

parents were currently married had ever been suspended from school.

Children whose parents did not complete high school were more likely to have been suspended from school and less likely to have been enrolled in a class for gifted children than were children whose parents had completed four or more years of college. This difference suggests that parental academic achievement is an important factor in a child's success in school, possibly by providing children with both a model to emulate and with academic experience to enhance their children's performance in school.

SUMMARY

This report outlines some of the more important aspects of childhood: the neighborhoods children live in, their family situation, early childhood interactions, involvement in daily activities with their parents, and their participation in school activities and progress in school.

Relative to children in single-parent or low income households, children in married-couple families and with higher incomes are more likely to enter nonfamily child care arrangements and to enter these arrangements at earlier ages. Their interaction with their parents related to basic reading skills is more frequent and their parents exert more supervision in their TV viewing habits. They are also more likely to participate as young adults in extracurricular activities and progress more steadily in school.

Family and economic situations affect children's everyday life, whether it is watching TV at home or participating in after school activities. The simple acts of reading to a child, enrolling them in art class, or cheering them on in a sporting event represents those small daily activities that grow into a lifetime of childhood memories. They are also the tools that help children excel in school, secure their first job, and start their own family. Parents with monetary resources can afford to provide their children with positive childhood experiences that develop both confidence and skills that will later serve as building blocks toward happy, productive adult lives. But as important as these economic investments are to child development, the role that parents play when interacting with their children is also extremely important in shaping and directing their children's future.

SOURCES OF DATA

The estimates in this report come from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), collected in the fall of 1994 by the U.S. Census Bureau. The data highlighted in this report come primarily from the child well-being topical modules in the 1992 and 1993 SIPP panels. These two panels were administered at the same time and were combined to form the sample universe for this report. The SIPP is a longitudinal survey conducted at 4 month intervals by the Census Bureau. Although the main focus of the SIPP is information on labor force participation, jobs, income, and participation in federal assistance programs, information on other topics is also collected in topical modules on a rotating basis.

The 1992 and 1993 SIPP panels also provide the baseline for a longitudinal analysis of the changes in children's well-being with respect to the Welfare Reform and Work Responsibility Act of 1996. Households from these panels are followed in the Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD), with data collected annually from 1998 through 2002.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet Census Bureau standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process — including the overall design of surveys, the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

The SIPP employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors, contact

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MORE INFORMATION

The report is available on the Internet (www.census.gov); search for child well-being data by clicking on the letter W in the Subjects A-Z section of the Web page and selecting "Well-being/Dynamics of Economic Well-Being."

Other research on child well-being from the SIPP can be found in the following reports: Jason M. Fields and Kristin E. Smith, *Poverty, Family Structure, and Child Well-Being: Indicators From the SIPP*, Population Division Working Paper Series, No. 23, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1998; Kristin E. Smith, Loretta E. Bass, and Jason M. Fields, *Child Well-Being Indicators From the SIPP*, Population Division Working Paper Series, No. 24, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1998. Both of these papers are also on the Internet on the "Population: Working Paper;" section under "Subjects A to Z."

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